

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 IO-03 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5834

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0027

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOCI, SREF, SY, LE

SUBJECT: SYRIAN JEWISH REFUGEES IN LEBANON

REFS: A. STATE 251677; B. BEIRUT 14202 (NOTALS)

1. DR. ATIYEH, HEAD OF LEBANESE JEWISH COMMUNITY, INFORMED EMBOFF JAN. 2 THAT THERE NO CHANGE IN SITUATION RE SYRIAN JEWISH REFUGEES NOW AWAITING ONWARD TRAVEL FROM LEBANON. ATIYEH REMAINS CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT SATISFACTORY SOLUTION WILL COME ABOUT IN DUE COURSE, AND HE CONTINUES ADVISE PATIENCE, RESTRAINT AND--ABOVE-ALL--NO INTERVENTION BY USG OR OTHER OUTSIDE PARTIES. WE HOPE DEPT WILL CONTINUE EMPHASIZE THESE POINTS TO DWEK, CONGRESSIONAL FIGURES MENTIONED PARA 1 REFTEL A, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES IN NO RPT NO UNCERTAIN TERMS.

2. FOR DEPT'S INFO, KEY GOL SOURCE (SAME AS THAT CITED PARA 3 REFTEL B) HAS REITERATED TO US THAT GOL IS SINCERELY TRYING TO WORK OUT ARRANGMENTS WITH DR. ATIYEH FOR EARLY DEPARTURE OF SYRIAN JEWISH REFUGEES. SOURCE NOTED THAT GOL HAS ALWAYS PERFORMED ADEQUATELY IN THIS REGARD IN PAST AND WONDERED WHY ANYONE SHOULD WISH CAST DOUBT ON LEBANESE INTENTIONS THIS TIME. HE STRONGLY CONFIDENTIAL

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ADVISED AGAINST ALLOWING THIS PROBLEM BECOME AN ISSUE BETWEEN GOL AND USV. IN ADDITION, HE FEARS THAT IF EXISTENCE OF SYRIAN JEWISH REFUGEES IN LEBANON WERE TO BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, GOL WOULD HAVE LITTLE RECOURSE BUT TO SEND THEM BACK TO SYRIA. (GIVEN THIS PROSPECT, AND IN LIGHT OF HIGHLY SENSITIVE NATURE OF OUR DISCREET CONTACTS WITH GOL SOURCE ON SUBJECT OF SYRIAN JEWS, WE PREFER DEPT NOT REVEAL TO INTERESTED PARTIES THAT EMBASSY IS IN TOUCH WITH GOL ON THIS MATTER.)

3. GOL SOURCE ALSO MENTIONED THAT LEBANESE REPS IN ILMAC, IN COURSE OF DISCUSSING RECENT RELEASE OF TWO IAF PILOTS WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS, DREW THEIR ATTENTION TO PROBLEM OF SYRIAN JEWISH REFUGEES IN LEBANON AND GOL'S EFFORTS TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR DEPARTURE. HE SAID ISRAELIS DISPLAYED UNDERSTANDING AND TOOK "RELAXED" VIEW OF MATTER.

4. IN VIEW OF DWEK'S REPEATED INTEREST IN EXTENDING PAROLE AUTHORITY TO SYRIAN JEWISH REFUGEES, WE WONDER IF THERE HAVE BEEN ANY DEVELOPMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT IN DEPT'S DISCUSSIONS WITH DWEK THAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT. IF USG IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING PAROLING SYRIAN JEWS INTO US, WE TRUST THAT MECHANISMS OF SUCH A STEP WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED IN LEBANON, SINCE THIS WOULD RISK CALLING ATTENTION TO THEIR PRESENCE AND JEOPARDIZE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR DEPARTURE ALL OVER AGAIN. BUFFUM

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